

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of handling a group call in a CDMA wireless communications system, comprising:  
classifying members of a group call into a first class or a second class, said first class  
5 comprising members authorized to both talk and listen, said second class comprising  
members authorized to listen but not to talk;  
initially assigning a private downlink channel to each member of said group call belonging  
to said first class;  
assigning a public downlink channel to at least one member of said group call belonging to  
10 said second class;  
changing the classification of a first member of said group call belonging to said first class  
to be said second class in response to said member not talking for a predetermined time  
period during said group call; and  
changing the downlink channel assignment of said first member from said respective  
15 private channel to said public downlink channel assigned to said at least one member of  
said group call belonging to said second class in response to said change in classification.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing both private and public downlink  
channels simultaneously.
- 20 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising changing the downlink channel assignment in  
response to a request to speak from at least one member of said group call belonging to said  
second class.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising staggering a change of status for pilot channels and traffic channels as members of said first group transition to members of said second group.

5 5. The method of claim 1 further comprising placing a member of said second group on said respective private channel just freed by said changing the downlink channel assignment of said first member from said respective private channel to said public downlink channel.

6. A method of handling a group call in a CDMA wireless communications system, comprising:

classifying members of a group call into a first class or a second class, said first class comprising members authorized to both talk and listen, said second class comprising members authorized to listen but not to talk;

5 initially assigning a private downlink channel to each member of said group call belonging to said first class;

assigning a public downlink channel to at least one member of said group call belonging to said second class;

10 initially uplinking information on a first and a second control channel, during said group call, by a first member of said group call belonging to said first class; and

thereafter, ceasing the uplinking of information on said first control channel, during said group call, by a first member in response to said first member not talking for a first predetermined time period during said group call.

15 7. The method of claim 6 further comprising:

thereafter, ceasing the uplinking of information on said second control channel, during said group call, by said first member in response to said first member not talking for a second predetermined time period during said group call; and

20 changing the downlink channel assignment of said first member from said respective private channel to said public downlink channel in response to said first member not talking for said second predetermined time period during said group call.

8. The method of claim 6 further comprising ending said group call when all of said members are silent for a length of time greater than a predetermined threshold.

5 9. The method of claim 6 further comprising processing, at said base station both private and public downlink channels concurrently.

10. The method of claim 6 further comprising allowing members of said second class to move to said first class and further assigning such moving members a private downlink channel on which to communicate.

11. A method of handling a group call in a CDMA wireless communications system,  
comprising:

classifying members of a group call into one of either a first class or a second class, said  
first class comprising members authorized to both talk and listen, said second class  
5 comprising members authorized to listen but not to talk;

initially assigning a private downlink channel and a private uplink channel to a first  
member of said group call belonging to said first class;

initially assigning the remaining members of said group call to one or more public  
downlink channels; and

10 thereafter, during said group call, substantially simultaneously:

reclassifying said first member to said second class;

reassigning said first member to said public downlink channel;

reclassifying a second member of said group call belonging to said second class to said  
first class;

15 reassigning said private downlink channel and said private uplink channel to said  
second member.

12. A method of facilitating communication comprising:

establishing a group of users in a CDMA wireless communication system, each of said  
users having a mobile terminal;

initiating a call to at least one other user of the group from a first mobile terminal;

5 assigning a first private channel to said first mobile terminal;

assigning other private channels to mobile terminals associated with said at least one other  
user of the group as needed; and

assigning a public channel to remaining users of the group.

10 13. The method of claim 12 further comprising timing out users such that private channels are  
freed for other users within the group.

14. The method of claim 12 further comprising allowing inactive users associated with the  
public channel to secure a private channel upon actuation of a command on their mobile  
15 terminal.

15 15. The method of claim 12 further comprising limiting the other private channels to a  
predetermined number.

16. A method of handling a group call in a CDMA wireless communications system,  
comprising:

dividing members of a group call to a first class or second class, said first class comprising  
members authorized to both talk and listen, said second class comprising members  
5 authorized to listen but not to talk;

assigning a private downlink/uplink channel pair to a member of said first class for  
communicating between said member of said first class and a base station;

assigning a public downlink channel without a corresponding uplink channel to a member  
of said second class for receiving downlink communications from said base station;

wherein, during a given group call, said first member and said second member receive  
downlink communications from said base station over their respective downlink  
channels.